

NEWS DIRECT FROM RUSSIA.

Are the Czar and his People Tired of the War?—Russia and her Military Resources.—Construction of New Forts and the Strengthening of Old Ones.—Sébastopol, Cronstadt, Nicolaief and Sveaborg.—The Financial Condition of Russia.—The Transportation of Provisions.—Are the Nobles or Serfs Discontented?—See, See, See.

Among the passengers who arrived on Friday last by the steamer Atlantic, was Colonel Tal. P. Shaffner, who has come direct from Russia, where he has been travelling for the last five or six months. As this was his second visit to this country, he had ample opportunities for observation and of becoming acquainted with its character and condition, its resources, and the popular feeling with regard to the present war. Wherever he went he was received by all classes, from the imperial family to the lowest official, with the greatest hospitality, and every attention and courtesy was paid to him during his visit. He has been charged by the English papers with being in the pay of the Czar, and that he is bound by pecuniary obligations to support the interests of Russia; but the real object of those charges, which, it is deserving of particular notice, have been made against nearly all Americans who have spoken favorably of Russia, is to throw discredit on their statements, and by doing so to conceal the actual condition of things in that country from the world. Their object, however, has become so apparent that their accusations are entirely disregarded, and the public mind in this country has, from the frequent misstatements, intentional or otherwise, of the British press, at last come to regard their accounts of the war with distrust and suspicion.

Soon after his arrival, we paid a visit to Col. Shaffner, and in the course of a few hours' conversation with him, obtained much of interesting information in relation to the war, and the means at the disposal of the Czar to carry it on. While in Russia, he travelled over a distance of three thousand miles, and visited Cronstadt, Nicolaief, Sveaborg, and many other of the most important fortresses throughout the empire. He was all through the northern, central and southern portions, and during his travels was in frequent intercourse with the nobility, as well as the lower classes of the population. Wherever he went it was only necessary to introduce himself as an American, when he was immediately greeted with the warmest welcome and compelled to partake of their hospitality. It was the same with all the members of the imperial family. Before giving any of the facts which he related to us, we must state that there were some which he could not as a man of honor make known without compromising his character with the Russian government and destroying all confidence with our countrymen in their business and personal relations. These facts relate to the numerical force of the army, the strength of the forts and the financial resources of the country, in regard to which he did not consider himself justified to enter into specific details, although he has given sufficient to enable us to form a pretty accurate estimate of their means and resources.

The wisdom of this policy on the part of the Czar will at once be perceived when contrasted with that of the Allies, whose movements are known to the Russians frequently before they take place. In many respects this secrecy is attended with the greatest advantage, and particularly when nations are engaged in actual warfare, cannot be too strictly enjoined upon all having business or official relations with them, and who are entrusted with matters of State importance. We have stated that Colonel Shaffner was in constant intercourse with all classes of the people; and as a great deal has been said about their feeling in respect to the war, we shall begin by giving his experience and impressions on this subject.

It has been reported that the nobility are becoming tired of the war, on account of the levies which are made upon them for men; and that they are beginning to display their opposition to the government already, though in what way we have not been informed. So far, however, from this being the case, they are among its most strenuous and ready supporters, and have signified their willingness, again and again, to sacrifice all their wealth before they will consent to yield an inch. There is only one sentiment among them, and that is a determination to carry on the war so long as there is a doubt in the treasury, or a man to shoulder a musket. On this matter they express their opinions pretty freely, and they appear to be based as much upon sound reason and policy as on a feeling of national pride or national enmity. They argue in this way:—"Suppose we are defeated: the loss will fall more heavily upon us than if we were to allow ourselves ignominiously to sue for peace. Our enemies, flushed with victory and renewed confidence in their own strength, would demand as an indemnity, perhaps the fairest and most fertile portion of our country—a portion, too, that we fought so hard and so long to obtain; they will insist, too, on defraying the expenses of the war with money, and upon the relinquishment of some of our best ports and the diminution of our navy, which they have already expressed their determination to confine within the narrowest limits." But there is still stronger feeling actuating them, and that is the feeling of religion, which almost reaches the bounds of fanaticism. It is summed up in the two words, their "God" and their "Emperor," and exceeds, or we should perhaps say stands in the place of, patriotism with them. Nothing can exceed their zeal and devotedness in seconding the wishes of the Czar, or their indignation at the outrages which have been committed upon their church by the allied troops. The desecration of the churches at Kerch aroused the most intense hatred throughout Russia—a hatred which it will take years to remove from the Russian. In fact, so great was the excitement created thereby that the government did not consider it politic or prudent to publish all the reported cases of outrage committed. The desecration of their churches and the outrages which have been perpetrated, it is feared, if fully known, might lead to turbulence, and give to the war the character of a religious feud or riot. Speak one day to a wealthy Russian noble about the feeling of the aristocracy, he said to Col. Shaffner that the moment the Czar required it, his whole property in money, estates and serfs, amounting to over ten millions, would be cheerfully given up, and he himself, and every member of his family, were ready to sacrifice themselves rather than allow the Allies to dictate terms to Russia. The general feeling, in which the very serfs participate, is one of confidence in the ultimate triumph of their country. They believe the Czar is invincible, and that Russia never can be defeated. It is possible to overcome such a country, or is it at all probable that the Czar, with almost unlimited resources at his command, with a nobility ready to support him to the utmost extent of their means, and a people who regard the war as a crusade against a sacrilegious foe—is it probable, we say, that he will yield one inch of his territory, or accede to a single demand which may lower the standing of his empire, either among his own subjects or the nations of the earth? Upon the means of enlistment and transportation of provisions reports have been circulated, and all of them either entirely unreliable, or such a commingling of fact and falsehood that it has been almost impossible to arrive at the truth. Correspondents writing from St. Petersburg to the French and English pa-

pers, state that it is necessary to use force in the drafting of men for the army, and that large bands of serfs who have escaped were infesting the country in different parts with their brigandage. Speaking of these reports, Col. Shaffner says there is no reliance to be placed on them; that he never heard of a single case in which compulsion was employed, and that the Russian serf enters the ranks cheerfully at the command of the Czar, whom he regards as the viceregent of God on earth. No difficulty whatever is experienced in executing the orders of the Emperor; and such is the alacrity with which they are carried out on the one hand and submitted to on the other, that he believes if it were left to the free will of the serfs themselves, hundreds of thousands of volunteers would flock to the standard of the Czar. New levies are raised with wonderful despatch, and in two or three months out of the raw material thus furnished, a well drilled, efficient and powerful army is formed and ready for active service. Although it may appear somewhat unreasonable, when his state of serfdom is considered, yet the Russian soldier has a great deal of personal pride, and he shows it particularly in perfecting himself in the use of his arms. As to the acts of brigandage, and in some cases even of murder, there is no doubt that they have been committed, but not to a greater extent than formerly; and that they are committed now is not to be regarded as a proof that the serfs are discontented or opposed to being sent to the Crimea.

The entire force of the Russian army, including that portion of it stationed at Perekop, numbered, on the middle of October last, about two hundred and fifty thousand. These occupy different positions along the route from Perekop to Sebastopol, and is so well defended by forts as to render all attempts of the Allies to cut off their supplies utterly powerless. Perekop itself is said to be so strongly protected, that it would employ the whole of the allied forces in reducing it.

The means of transportation, contrary to the statement of the Allies, have not been cut off, nor have they suffered any interruption from the capture of Kerch and the destruction of the "immense" quantities of grain in the Sea of Azoff. The grain, it now appears, instead of belonging to Russia, was the property of Greek merchants, who had offered it for sale to the Russian government at such an exorbitant price that they refused to purchase it. They never received provisions in this direction, as they have always been sent by way of Perekop. The Greek merchants, fearing the capture of their property, it seems applied to the Russians for protection; but long before their application was made they were informed that the Sea of Azoff would not be defended against the allied fleets, and they were accordingly advised to take their own counsel in time. The Russian government, however, although it refused to protect them, made an appropriation of a large amount of money to sink vessels, filled with stone, in the channel at Kerch, to prevent the passage of the enemy's vessels. The contract for the performance of this work was given to the Greeks themselves, no doubt being entertained that, as it was for their benefit, the work would be promptly and faithfully executed. The prospect of present gain, however, being more powerful than the dread of approaching danger, the Greek merchants, instead of filling the vessels with stone, used sand, which was washed away by the current, leaving the channel free for the passage of the allies. As this was known at St. Petersburg, very little sympathy, it may be supposed, was manifested for the merchants, who, blinded by their avarice and false to their agreement, had reaped the reward of their own dishonesty.

The transportation of provisions has been so effectively carried on, that the Russian army in Sebastopol have never suffered, and the Commissariat has always been well supplied. There were several occasions on which the soldiers were put upon reduced rations, but these were days of fast prescribed by the church, and which are pretty strictly observed. They are allowed five pounds of meat per week to each man, and there are two days of abstinence from meat out of the seven, leaving an average of one pound per day. The provisions are generally conveyed from the Smolensk and Saratoff countries to the Crimea in wagons, which are loaded on their return with salt. The same wagons, before the war, went to the Crimea empty, but now they are laden both ways, and make double their former profit, notwithstanding the assertion of a St. Petersburg correspondent of the Paris Press, that the wagons, having no employment, are compelled to follow the army.

While travelling through the wheat producing districts, Colonel Shaffner saw crops which, he said, were as extensive as any that had been reaped for many years before; and so slight has been the draft on the agricultural population by the raising of new levies, that it will not in the least diminish the next year's produce. When it is remembered besides, that this will have to be kept in the country, in consequence of the allied fleets being in possession of all the outlets from the Black and Baltic seas, there would seem to be very little danger of the Russian army suffering from want of provisions.

The gallant and protracted defence of Sebastopol has proved that, in her fortifications, Russia is inferior to no other country in the world. Comparatively little was known of her system of defences, and up to the last few months such places as Nicolaief and Sveaborg were never heard of. In the case of Sebastopol, it is a remarkable fact that some of the principal defences were earthworks, and still more remarkable, that they were found to be more easily defended against an assault than any other kind of fortification. Sebastopol, however, has not furnished the first proof of this fact, for in our War of Independence, they formed the chief bulwarks, against which the dogged courage of the British troops broke in vain. From the battle of Bunker Hill, on whose heights the patriots had entrenched themselves behind a breastwork of earth, to the last struggle with the retreating foe, fortifications of earthwork were used, and traces of them may still be seen all over the country. Whether Toulon is indebted to us for this important fact cannot now be determined, but the value of earthworks for defence was established here three quarters of a century ago.

The whole line of fortifications around Sebastopol was constructed of bundles of sticks, placed upright and overlaid with earth; and the far famed Malakoff was nothing more than a mound of earth, with a facing of stone. During the summer, however, this earth was so dry that it became quite friable, and when struck by a ball it was thrown up in a cloud of dust. Under these circumstances it was found impossible to repair the damage done by the bombardment; and in many instances where an assault was made the Allies were repulsed in a hand-to-hand encounter with the Russians. This was one of the causes which rendered the evacuation of the southern side necessary, but it was not the only one. The Russian cannon were actually worn out, and were exploding daily, killing those who served them. Under these circumstances Gortschakoff wrote to the Emperor several weeks before the evacuation, informing him of the particulars, and received commands that he should abandon the south side whenever he should, in his judgment, think the time had arrived. As well was it known in St. Petersburg that the south side was to be evacuated, that it was customary for the people to inquire every morning if the army had

crossed over. The trophies which were found by the allied army after they had captured their dearly earned prize, and about which they made such a parade, were the used up cannon, and the piles of balls were those which they had themselves fired into the city, and which the Russians had intended to recast to the size of their own guns. They also found powder, but it was some which had been placed in the mines, and which became so damp that it would not explode. It is not true that they got large quantities of clothing and provisions, for everything of value had been removed several days before the evacuation. It is also worthy of notice that the Russians had constructed three bridges instead of one, and that, although their sick and wounded were left behind, yet the Allies did not dare to prevent a portion of them from returning to carry them over to the north side.

It has been asked how the Russians buried their dead, and great concern manifested to know how it happened that a terrible plague did not break out with thousands of unburied corpses lying within the narrow confines of a walled city. In reply to this we have been informed that they did not allow their dead to lie above ground; that they were conveyed to the north side in boats, which were kept constantly running every day, and buried alongside the harbor.

Considerable mortification, it is true, was felt throughout Russia when the evacuation of the south side was known, for it was still hoped that they might be enabled to hold it. But if this was the feeling among the people and the nobility, they felt proud of the achievements of the army, and on the Czar's name day, which is the anniversary of his patron saint, and which in Russia is regarded as a festival, they showed, by their demeanor and conversation, how highly they prized the fame which had been won by their gallant countrymen in the Crimea. The streets were crowded with the populace, and even the windows were thronged with spectators, and when the Emperor appeared in public, every one seemed anxious to show by his manner their love and devotion for him, and their readiness to sacrifice everything for "their God and their Czar." In all the churches prayers were offered for "the triumphant evacuation of the south side."

The Russian calculation of their entire loss, from the commencement of the war up to the first of October, exclusive of those who have been killed and thirty thousand men. This is independent also of the loss in prisoners taken by the Allies. The fortifications of Cronstadt have been largely increased during the present year, in anticipation of the threatened assault of the English Baltic fleet. Workmen were employed on them all last summer, and no expense has been spared to render them impregnable. New guns of greater calibre and range have replaced the old ones, and the foundries are kept in operation day and night, forging more. This does not look as if the government was straitened for want of money. Last year the town was fortified only on one side, but such has been the progress made since, that it is now surrounded by forts constructed of iron and stone. The north side, which was formerly the weakest, will present next year five new forts bristling with cannon, in addition to those that have been already erected. When all these are completed there will be a perfect line of fortifications across the Gulf, and about fifteen miles from St. Petersburg. Not satisfied with these defences, the Archduke Constantine has ordered the construction of a large number of small gun boats. If Sir Charles Napier failed to take Cronstadt in its former state, what prospect would he have now, when it has been strengthened to such an extent that it is now considered impregnable?

Nicolaief is the pet fortress of the Russians, and is regarded as one of their best, if not superior to the others. As in the case of Cronstadt, they have taken all the old cannon out, and have mounted new ones in their place. They speak of Nicolaief as impregnable, and they laugh at the threats of the Allies to take it, as a foolish, vainglorious boast. The bombardment of Sveaborg, of which so much has been said by the English press, cost the Allies twenty-five millions of dollars, while the loss to the Russians did not exceed one hundred and fifty thousand. In fact, from what Colonel Shaffner tells us, we think it has been rather more profitable than otherwise, so far as the Russians are concerned. After making a terrible demonstration before the place, and expending enough powder and ball upon it to take the city twice over, they retired under the impression that they had laid it in ruins. It now appears that they only succeeded in burning a number of old Swedish workshops, which the Russians intended to remove, and for which they had a large number of workmen already employed. There was only one brick building of any consequence destroyed. The apprehensions entertained by the besieged were so slight, that they walked about utterly regardless of the bombardment. About eighty persons were killed, and these may be looked upon as victims to their own tenacity.

With the exception of the small loan which has been made since the commencement of the war, the whole expenses have been defrayed from the revenues of the country. There is no lack of means; and as a proof of this it is only necessary to state that the public works which were commenced last year are carried on with unabated vigor, and on the same extensive scale on which they were begun. The charge has been made that the government has taken the obnoxious money, but so far from this being the fact, it is actually increasing the wealth of the church by the expenditure of millions for the erection of edifices of still greater magnificence than any yet built. The very same some of these are of gold, and the ornaments in the interior are of the same valuable material, and many of them studded with diamonds and other precious stones. The yield of the gold, silver and platinum mines of the year has exceeded that of any former year by three millions of dollars. In addition to this the government have forbid the exportation of the precious metals; the mint is kept in constant operation night and day, and the paper money is as current now as ever. When it is considered that all the money which is expended for the war is still kept in the country, and only passes from the possession of one Russian to that of another, there appears to be little reason to believe in the assertion of the Allies, that Russia is already in an impoverished condition. There is no disputing the fact that they have entirely miscalculated the strength of their enemy, or that they have intentionally misrepresented the actual condition of Russia. The effects of the war are scarcely perceptible, and so little dread is entertained of the Allies that the government is making preparations for a ten years' war. The means of the Imperial family alone would be sufficient to carry it through. The obligations imposed upon them in this capacity are considered the least of all.

We were also informed that the reports which have been circulated as to a feeling of jealousy and dislike existing between the members of the Imperial family are entirely without foundation, and that they are bound to each other by the closest ties of affection. They are all of one mind with regard to the war, and are resolved not to yield an inch of their territories, or agree to any terms that will compromise the pride or dignity of the country. But above everything else they prize their position as protectors of the Christians, and will never consent to abandon it. The obligations imposed upon them in this capacity are considered the least of all.

THE STATE OF THE UNION.

OPENING OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH CONGRESS.

PROGRAMME FOR THE ORGANIZATION.

Complete Lists of House and Senate.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR.

History of the Contests of 1839 and 1849.

The Message and the Secretaries' Reports.

THE KANSAS TROUBLE.

OUR RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND.

MODIFICATIONS IN THE TARIFF.

INCREASE OF THE ARMY AND NAVY.

Analysis, Explanation and Description of the Bills and Resolutions to Come Before Congress.

The Thirty-fourth Congress will commence its first session at Washington to-day.

At twelve o'clock, noon, the Senate will be called to order by Joseph D. Bright, of Indiana, President pro tem. The new members will be sworn in by the President. We presume it is within the power of the Senate to elect a new speaker, but by a new election, but this, according to our recollection, has not been customary. Mr. Mangum, elected to the chair of the Senate on the accession of John Tyler to the Presidency, retained that post without question, down to the accession of Mr. G. M. Dallas, elected Vice President by the people, at the expiration of Mr. Tyler's term. Had the political complexion of the Senate been changed since last session, it is probable that the question of superseding or retaining Mr. Bright would be raised soon after the meeting of the new Senate; but that body remains of the political faith with the incumbent, and will almost certainly retain him in the chair. Mr. Ashbury Dickens, the Secretary, and the subordinate officers of the Senate, hold their places without change until a resolution shall have been offered and adopted, to proceed to the election of a successor in the case of any one of them; but none such is likely to be made at this session. The ranks of the national democracy will have been strengthened at the opening of this session, by the qualification of Mr. Fugh, instead of Mr. Chase, as Senator from Ohio; and a successor of like faith to Mr. Cooper, (national whig,) may soon be expected from Pennsylvania. On the other hand, the two new free soil Senators from New Hampshire, and one each from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, will somewhat diminish, but cannot shake the national democratic majority in that branch, whose members, whether before or after the vacancies now existing in the delegations from Pennsylvania, Indiana and California, shall have been filled, two-thirds will choose to be accounted members of the democratic party, and supporters, in a moderate and reasonable way, of the existing federal administration. Nothing, unless, or will be less than a landslide, to prevent a nomination, by the Senate to the House, by 1 o'clock P. M., that the former has been duly organized, and is prepared to join in communicating with the President, that this Congress has regularly convened, and is ready to receive any communications he may see fit to make.

At the same hour the hall of the House of Representatives will present a curious scene. The splitting up of parties, and the consequent difficulty attendant upon the organization of the House—the tremendous outside pressure for the small places in the gift of the House, and the old members of which it is composed, will make the hall a perfect Babel of confusion for a few days.

There will be a great deal of "noise and confusion" at 12 o'clock to-day, and Mr. John W. Forney, of Pennsylvania, will be obliged to call the members to order several times before they come.

Mr. Forney was Clerk of the last Congress, and he officiates to-day, according to custom. After he has got order he will take a printed list, and "call the roll."

RECAPITULATION.

Thirty-fourth Congress, Thirty-first Congress.

Administration, Opposition, Administration, Whigs.

The following is a correct list of the members of both branches—

TERM COMMENCED FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1855, AND TERMINATES MARCH 4, 1857. FIRST SESSION WILL MEET ON MONDAY, (TO-DAY,) DECEMBER 3, 1855.

SENATE.

The Senate consists of two Senators from each State. There are thirty-one States, represented by sixty-two Senators.

Whigs in Italy; Democrats in roman; A. Abolitionists; K. N. Know Nothings.

President.—James D. Bright, of Indiana.

Secretary.—Ashbury Dickens, of New York.

Alabama, Episcop. — Nicholas Pickens, 1855.

Benjamin F. Johnson, 1856.

Arkansas, Episcop. — Stephen Adams, 1855.

Robert W. Johnson, 1856.

California, Episcop. — Henry S. Geyer, 1855.

John B. Weller, 1856.

James A. Bayard, 1855.

John M. Clayton (K. N.), 1856.

Stephen H. Mallie, 1855.

David R. Porter, 1856.

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